

New documents on political and social issues

May 2011

DIVERSITY

MELTING POT CITIES AND SUBURBS: RACIAL AND ETHNIC CHANGE IN METRO AMERICA IN THE 2000S

Brookings Institution, May 4, 2011

http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2011/0504_census_ethnicity_frey/0504_census_ethnicity_frey.pdf

Old images of race and place in America are changing rapidly. Nowhere are these shifts more apparent than in major U.S. cities and their suburbs. An analysis of data from the 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial censuses reveals that Hispanics now outnumber blacks and represent the largest minority group in major American cities, among others.

PIGMENTS OF OUR IMAGINATION: THE RACIALIZATION OF THE HISPANIC-LATINO CATEGORY

Migration Policy Institute, April 2011

http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=837

The groups included under the label "Hispanic" or "Latino" — Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Colombians, and the many other nationalities from Latin America and even Spain itself — were not "Hispanics" or "Latinos" in their countries of origin; rather, they only became so once they arrived in the United States. As such, the labels of Hispanic and Latino have a particular meaning only in the US context in which it was constructed and is applied, and where its meaning continues to evolve.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY: BOOSTING THE NATION'S ECONOMY BY IMPROVING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES AMONG STUDENTS OF COLOR AND NATIVE STUDENTS

Alliance for Excellent Education, May 2011

http://www.all4ed.org/files/EdEconBrief_sebsoc.pdf

Nearly sixty years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown versus Board of Education* that the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place in the field of public education, the promise of an equal education remains unmet for too many of the nation's students of color and Native students, according to the brief. Meeting the promise of *Brown* by graduating more of these students from high school would lead to dramatic economic growth nationwide, the brief finds.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: 2010

U.S. Census Bureau, May 2011

http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2010/tables.html

Among the employed population 25 and older, 37 percent of women had attained a bachelor's degree or more as of 2010, compared with 35 percent of men, according to the data. In contrast, among all adults 25 and older, 29.6 percent of women and 30.3 percent of men had at least a bachelor's degree. In 2010, 36 percent of the nation's population aged 25 and older left school before obtaining a degree.

YOUNG CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS AND THE PATH TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Urban Institute, April 22, 2011

http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412330-young-children.pdf

The growing presence of young children of immigrants is changing the demographic makeup of classrooms, yet debates about early education and school reform often do not mention them. As high-quality education for all becomes a prominent policy and political goal, key questions remain unanswered about whether schools and early childhood programs are addressing their needs.

ELECTIONS

THE LATINO ELECTORATE IN 2010: MORE VOTERS, MORE NON-VOTERS

Pew Hispanic Center, April 26, 2011

http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/141.pdf

More than 6.6 million Latinos voted in last year's election, a record for a midterm, according to an analysis of new Census Bureau data by the Pew Hispanic Center. Latinos also were a larger share of the electorate in 2010 than in any previous midterm election, representing 6.9% of all voters, up from 5.8% in 2006.

THE STATE OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE POLICY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS

Congressional Research Service, April 29, 2011

http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/162766.pdf

Campaign finance policy is arguably at a crossroads. For decades, Congress, regulatory agencies, and courts have emphasized the need to reduce potential corruption by providing public disclosure of information about campaign contributions and expenditures. Preventing corruption and enhancing transparency remain prominent themes in campaign finance policy, but what those goals mean and how they should be accomplished appears to be in flux.

UPGRADING DEMOCRACY: IMPROVING STATES' VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

The Pew Center on the States, May 9, 2011

http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Upgrading Democracy report.pdf America's state voter registration systems need to be overhauled. In the 2008 general election, an estimated 2.2 million eligible Americans were unable to cast ballots due to problems with their voter registrations.

Working with election officials and other experts, Pew identified a way to help election offices modernize their voter rolls by improving the technology they use to capture data about voters and to keep it current.

HEALTH CARE

QUALITY HEALTH CARE DELIVERED EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

Center for American Progress, April 29, 2011

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/04/pdf/cost_containment.pdf

Key provisions in the Affordable Care Act promise improvements in the quality of health care at lower costs. This promise will take time, yet actually operating right now across America, hidden in plain sight, are initiatives in the private sector and state Medicaid programs that will change the way health care is delivered. The Affordable Care Act not only builds upon these efforts but also will significantly reinforce them.

IMMIGRATION

BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

The White House, May 2011

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/immigration_blueprint.pdf

President Obama says the ultimate solution for fixing an immigration system that penalizes immigrants and citizens alike is comprehensive reform that strengthens the nation's security, economy and global competitiveness.

In the El Paso speech Obama set out a blueprint for immigration reform and what it must provide:

- Secure the nation's borders and focus enforcement on those who would cause the greatest harm, such as those who engage in illegal drug trafficking and terrorism.
- Hold accountable those employers who deliberately hire and exploit undocumented workers.
- Strengthen the legal immigration system and stop punishing innocent young people who were brought to the United States illegally by their parents.
- Hold accountable those living here illegally by requiring them to register, undergo a background check, pay taxes and learn English, all before becoming eligible for full citizenship.

IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: HOW WELL ARE THEY INTEGRATING INTO SOCIETY?

Migration Policy Institute, May 2011

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/integration-Jimenez.pdf

Even though immigration is intertwined with the history of the U.S., fears about immigrants' ability to integrate remain an area of concern. Yet an examination of immigrants' integration across five major indicators, language proficiency, socioeconomic attainment, political participation, residential locale, and social interaction with host communities, shows they are integrating reasonably well. Remarkably, the process has unfolded almost entirely without policy intervention. The author examines the laissez faire policy approach to integration, raising concerns about how the state of public education and size of the U.S. unauthorized population may remain powerful barriers to immigrants' full social, economic, and political integration.

JUSTICE

DEATH ROW USA

NAACP Legal Defense Fund, April 28, 2011

http://naacpldf.org/files/publications/DRUSA_Spring_2010.pdf

The latest edition of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's "Death Row USA" shows that the number of people on the death row in the United States is continuing to slowly decline, falling to 3,260 as of April 1, 2010. In 2000, there were 3,682 inmates on death row. Nationally, the racial composition of those on death row is 44% white, 41% black, and 12% Latino/Latina.

OVERCRIMINALIZATION: AN EXPLOSION OF FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW

The Heritage Foundation, April 28, 2011

http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2011/pdf/fs0086.pdf

Federal criminal law has exploded in size and scope and deteriorated in quality. It used to focus on inherently wrongful conduct: treason, murder, counterfeiting, and the like. Today, an unimaginably broad range of socially and economically beneficial conduct is criminalized, according to the report.

STATE OF RECIDIVISM: THE REVOLVING DOOR OF AMERICA'S PRISONS

Pew Center on the States, April 2011

http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Pew_State_of_Recidivism.pdf
States today spend more than \$50 billion a year on corrections, yet recidivism rates
remain stubbornly high. As the slumping economy forces states to do more with less,
policy makers are looking for a better public safety return on their corrections dollars.

MEDIA

THE DECIDERS: FACEBOOK, GOOGLE, AND THE FUTURE OF PRIVACY AND FREE SPEECH

Brookings Institution, May 2nd, 2011

http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2011/0502_free_speech_rosen/0502_free_speech_rosen.pdf

This essay examines four different areas where the era of Facebook and Google will challenge existing ideas about constitutional protections for free speech and privacy: ubiquitous surveillance with GPS devices and online surveillance cameras; airport body scanners; embarrassing Facebook photos and the problem of digital forgetting; and controversial YouTube videos. In each area, Preserving constitutional values requires a different balance of legal and technological solutions, combined with political mobilization that leads to changes in social norms.

YOUNG ADULTS DON'T FOLLOW NEWS, IT FOLLOWS THEM

YaleGlobal, May 19, 2011

http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/young-adults-news-follows-them

A few decades ago, the well-informed relied on doorstep delivery of a newspaper or two. As the computer age dawned, the young roamed the internet, often searching for news sites reinforcing their view of the world. Newsgathering is undergoing another phase of evolution with the advent of social media.

POLITICS

BEYOND RED VS. BLUE: THE POLITICAL TYPOLOGY

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, May 4, 2011

http://people-press.org/2011/05/04/beyond-red-vs-blue-the-political-typology/

With the economy still struggling and the nation involved in multiple military operations overseas, the public's political mood is fractious. In this environment, many political attitudes have become more doctrinaire at both ends of the ideological spectrum, a polarization that reflects the current atmosphere in Washington. Yet at the same time, a growing number of Americans are choosing not to identify with either political party, and the center of the political spectrum is increasingly diverse.

LOBBYING REGISTRATION AND DISCLOSURE: BEFORE AND AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF THE HONEST LEADERSHIP AND OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT OF 2007

Congressional Research Service, April 22, 2011

http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/162771.pdf

This report focuses on changes made to lobbying registration, termination, and disclosure requirements and provides analysis of the volume of registration, termination, and disclosure reports filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate before and after the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA)'s passage.

WOMEN

MATERNITY, PATERNITY, AND ADOPTION LEAVE IN THE UNITED STATES

Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2011

http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/maternity-paternity-and-adoption-leave-in-the-united-states/at download/file

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) passed in 1993, employees—both men and women—are entitled to 12 weeks unpaid leave around the time of the birth of a child, as long as they work in firms with at least 50 employees, and meet minimum tenure and working hour requirements. The employer can decide whether they continue to receive their wages or salary during their maternity or paternity leave. The United States is among a very small number of countries in the world without a statutory right to paid maternity leave for employees.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND BLACK WOMEN

Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2011 http://www.iwpr.org/publications/pubs/social-security-and-black-women/at_download/file

As a social insurance program, Social Security provides millions of Americans with financial resources when they face challenges such as disability and lack of employment at older ages. While the protections Social Security offers benefit men and women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds and income levels, the program is particularly important for women and people of color, who tend to have fewer alternative sources of income, experience higher poverty rates, and earn less on average throughout their working years.

All previous web alerts can be found at: http://france.usembassv.gov/web-alert.html